

PERIOD 4 1800–1848

Overview

Period 4 focuses on the history of the United States between 1800 and 1848. This division highlights the new nation's move from an emerging postcolonial country to one that controlled most of a continent and had to redefine the meaning of both democracy and citizenship. This was an era of competing political, social, and economic “revolutions,” as dramatic changes in voting rights, the economy, and society led to a mass democracy and a growing, if contested, sense of a national identity.

The end of the Federalist era and the emergence of the Democratic-Republicans marked the beginning of the process of broadening participatory democracy. The four decades that followed the turn of the nineteenth century saw the broadening of the franchise (the right to vote) from the privileged few to most white males. To be sure, many were still left without voting rights—women, American Indians, most African Americans (whether enslaved or not), and many newly arrived immigrants—but the move toward a more open definition of citizenship gained momentum.

The creation of modern political parties also began during this period as the United States moved from the Federalist decade of the 1790s to the formation of the Democratic-Republicans and later the Democratic and Whig parties. As the voter base broadened and the nation expanded, questions arose about the proper role of the federal and state governments in the growing republic and the expanding economy. Some of these issues were decided by the U.S. Supreme Court; for example, in *McCulloch v. Maryland*, Supreme Court decided that state laws could be ruled unconstitutional. Other issues surfaced in the context of new economic conditions that saw the emergence of factories in the North and the development of slavery as a uniquely southern institution. The diverging economic structures of the North and South led to a sharpening of distinct regional identities. All of these changes left many Americans struggling to match democratic ideals with the harsher realities surrounding them, touching off a series of reform efforts—the Second Great Awakening, the movement for women's rights, and abolition (the move to abolish slavery)—that ultimately served both to unite and divide the country.

During this period, the United States also embarked on unprecedented territorial and economic expansion. The boundaries of the United States doubled with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, opening the prospect of landownership to millions and beginning the rapid westward movement that transformed the continent. Along with access to new lands came revolutionary changes in technology and economic specialization that brought both prosperity and increased focus on regional interests that had an impact on markets as well as politics. This rapid development resulted in significant changes in the lives of everyone regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic group. Many people were able to take advantage of new opportunities, while others, such as American Indians like the Cherokee and the Iroquois nation, found themselves further marginalized in the name of “progress.”

Rapidly changing technology fueled the expansion of American commerce into the global market as factories expanded in the North and cotton cultivation came to dominate the southern economy. Efforts to organize the national economy, including proposals such as the Ameri-

can System, which sought to use tariff revenues to fund internal improvements, strengthened economic ties between the North and the newly opening West but further isolated the slaveholding South. Efforts to modernize transportation fostered regional division, as canals and roads tended to connect the Northeast to the West, while the South continued to rely on rivers for transportation and trade. The lives of people in all parts of the country were affected by this economic growth as the nature of the workplace changed.

Entry into the global economy also complicated U.S. foreign policy. Territorial expansion and growing markets required involvement with the rest of the world. At the same time, the United States sought to remain isolated from European political conflicts. Territorial expansion also raised questions about the role of slavery in the newly acquired areas. The existence and expansion of slavery emerged during this period as issues of overarching national concern. The slavery question was settled temporarily by political expediency, such as the Missouri Compromise, which divided the Louisiana Territory into free and slave areas, but there was no final resolution to the debate over slavery in this era.

Key Terms

Be sure that you understand the meaning of these terms and their relevance in U.S. history.

Economic specialization	Primacy of the judiciary
Human perfectibility	Regional identity
Interchangeable parts	Republicanism
Internal improvements	Romantic beliefs
Market revolution and market economy	Social hierarchy
Mass democracy	Sovereignty
National culture	Transcendentalism
Nativism	

Questions to Consider

As you study Period 4, keep the following thematic questions in mind.

Identity

- ✦ What characteristics of national identity emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century?
- ✦ What factors encouraged and which impeded the formation of a national identity?
- ✦ Why during this period did Americans form both a national and a regional identity, and how did the two conflict with each other?
- ✦ How did government policies shape the formation of regional identities in the North, South, and West?
- ✦ How did both free and enslaved African Americans preserve their identity and their culture in the face of increased barriers that confronted them?

America's History Chapter Summaries

(required AP[®] content in bold)

Chapter 8

Creating a Republican Culture, 1790–1820

Chapter 8 explores the impact of the developing ideology of republicanism on the economy, society, and culture. It looks at the development of technology and transportation and the expansion of both manufacturing and agriculture in the early years of the nineteenth century. The chapter also explores new forms for private life and education, the growing debate over slaves, and the emergence of new religious sensibilities that culminated in the Second Great Awakening.

In the years following the American Revolution, the growth of the market economy led a number of states, as well as the federal government, to support private businesses that **expanded technology and transportation** and thus contributed to regional and national growth (ex: Lancaster Turnpike, canals). **These economic developments precipitated profound changes in business, manufacturing, and agriculture** and in the lives of many Americans. Rural families that previously relied on farming became the nation's first factory workers, while others in **rural areas began to produce goods for distant markets**, making them more prosperous but also more dependent on the market.

The new market economy led to changes in lifestyles in both urban and rural areas, which brought changes in social norms. The belief in legal equality resulted in greater social mobility for some, but women were constrained by traditional views of gender roles. Still, **women's experiences in the American Revolution and in the Enlightenment put forth the ideology of "republican motherhood" for white women**. The ideal gave women within the family a new role in promoting republican culture. The ideas of a unique American identity based on the idea of the United States as a unique experiment in democracy led to the **emergence of a new and independent national culture in the arts and literature**.

While the Enlightenment had given hope to some that the institution of slavery would disappear, by the early decades of the nineteenth century, **slavery had become increasingly associated with the South's regional identity**. As slavery expanded across the South, the region became **more distinct from other regions of the country and fueled debates over the extension of slavery, leading to the Missouri Compromise of 1820**.

American religious and secular beliefs both changed in the early nineteenth century. Beginning in the 1790s, a series of religious revivals led to the **Second Great Awakening, based on the belief in human perfectibility**. These new beliefs, grounded in romanticism, also sparked a wave of **voluntary organization dedicated to social reform**. Women in particular began to take up reform work in areas that fit with white women's traditional concerns: raising children, the home, and campaigns for moral reform. Women increasingly played a role in other reform movements as well, finding opportunities to work for better education for children, temperance, and abolition. The **Second Great Awakening** also led to changes in Protestantism, how many people viewed the role of religion in national life, and the increasing insistence that Christians had an obligation to bring about meaningful reform in society.

Key Concept 4.2

Key Concept 4.2.I.A

Key Concept 4.2.I.B

Key Concept 4.2.I.B

Key Concept 4.1.III.A

Key Concept 3.2.III.A

Key Concept 4.1.I.D

Key Concept 4.2.III.C

Key Concept 4.3.III.A

Key Concept 4.1.II.A

Chapter 9

Transforming the Economy, 1800–1860

Chapter 9 examines the causes of the economic transformation of the first half of the nineteenth century, as well as the consequences that resulted from these changes. The two driving forces of economic growth during this period were the Industrial Revolution and the development and expansion of the market economy. These developments brought with them social transformations as well: the rise of an urban society, growing ties between the Northeast and the Midwest along with the further isolation of the South, and increased tensions among different social groups throughout the country, including newly arriving immigrants from Ireland and Germany.

Industrialization unfolded in the United States between 1790 and 1860 and included the development and growth of the modern factory system, with a distinct division of labor and enormous increases in production. Textile factories in particular illustrated the favorable combination of new technologies, newly discovered power sources, identification of new labor pools, and the support of **government economic policies such as protective tariffs**. The creation of interchangeable parts further aided the growth of manufacturing.

Key Concept 4.1.I.C

Many of the early workers in textile factories were women, though their labor was soon supplemented by **low-skilled men**, who produced the goods that supplied both local and international markets. Many soon found themselves at odds with management over low pay and harsh working conditions, leading to early labor organization and disagreements about what the rights of working classes should be. Advances in manufacturing technology led to greatly increased production in many new industries, particularly textiles (ex: Lancaster model, Lowell model, Samuel Slater, the Boston Associates, Eli Whitney).

Key Concept 4.2.I.B

The national economy benefitted from advances in the construction of roads and canals, transportation networks that facilitated both commerce and **movement of settlers to the West**. Cities and towns grew along these trade routes, while Atlantic seaports remained centers of both foreign and domestic trade.

Key Concept 4.2.I.A

The rapidly expanding domestic and international market economy led to debates about both the **government's role in that expansion** and the regional differences that were developing. **State-sponsored roads and canals** facilitated that expansion and led to calls for more government involvement in such infrastructure improvements (ex: American System, the Erie Canal, the National Road).

Key Concept 4.2.III.A

Key Concept 4.2.I.A
Key Concept 4.2.II.A

The Market Revolution widened the gap between the rich and poor, creating a business elite in many towns and cities, as well as a growing middle class that set themselves apart from the working classes. Women who could stay at home saw themselves as the guardians of the futures of their children, continuing the **transformation of gender and family roles**. This transformation separated middle-class women from women who did not have the luxury of staying out of the workplace. For middle-class men, many came to see their success as a result of their willingness to work, giving rise to the image of the self-made man. This perception obscured the hard work done by those at the poorer end of the economic scale and led to further class divisions.

Key Concept 4.2.III.D

Chapter 10

A Democratic Revolution, 1800–1844

Chapter 10 examines the causes and consequences of the political changes that accompanied the economic transformation of the early nineteenth century. It follows the rise of popular politics and the decline of the dominance of the wealthy “notables”—northern landlords, southern planters, and seacoast merchants. The chapter also explores the rise and presidency of Andrew Jackson and the emergence of the Second Party System.

Key Concept 4.1.I

The growth of mass democracy began as the right to vote was extended to more white men, though many still remained unable to claim full citizenship. Concurrent with the expansion of democracy was the rise of political parties, often run by professional politicians such as lawyers or journalists. The election of 1824 pitted the older “notables”—John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay—against William Crawford, a protégé of Thomas Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson, the rising hero of the War of 1812. Jackson, backed by a group of supporters who called themselves “democrats” to emphasize their egalitarian policies, won the most electoral votes but did not win a majority, and the House of Representatives voted to elect John Quincy Adams as president. As president, John Quincy Adams faced fierce **opposition to his support of protective tariffs** and his support of Clay’s proposed **American System**.

Key Concept 4.1.I.C
Key Concept 4.2.II.B

Andrew Jackson’s run for the presidency in 1818 produced a huge voter turnout that signaled the real beginning of mass democracy in the United States. As president, Jackson enjoyed support for his policies of decentralization, but he also confronted some of his own supporters in South Carolina who tried to assert that **state’s right to reject federal law** in the nullification crisis. Jackson also struck at both the American System and **supporters of centrally controlled economy**, which symbolized the Bank of the United States. Jackson also threw his full support behind the Indian Removal Act, which called for the **relocation of American Indians**. The Cherokees attempted to use the **Supreme Court’s power** to fight the state of Georgia and removal. Although the Supreme Court sided with the Cherokees in *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), Jackson’s negotiators pushed through the fraudulent Treaty of New Echota to effect removal. By the time Jackson left office in 1837, the **Second Party System, consisting of the Democrats and the newly formed Whig Party**, had emerged. The economic chaos that resulted from the Panic of 1837 led to disillusionment with Jackson’s successor, President Martin Van Buren, resulting in a Whig victory in the election of 1840.

Key Concept 4.3.II.B

Key Concept 4.2.II.B

Key Concept 4.1.I.A

Chapter 11

Religion and Reform, 1800–1860

Chapter 11 examines a number of reform movements in the first half of the nineteenth century. The transcendentalist movement led to unique American art and culture and emphasized individualism, especially among the middle class. The chapter also explores the rise of utopian movements and religion and looks at the rise of urban popular culture and a wave of European immigration. Finally, it focuses on the rise of abolitionism and the women’s rights movement.

Key Concept 4.1.II.A

A number of communitarian movements emerged in the middle years of the nineteenth century, growing out of the **Second Great Awakening’s support for the doctrine of perfectibility** and the search for utopia on earth (ex: Brook Farm, the Shakers, the Oneida Colony, the Fourier communities). The Mormons also emerged during this period. Out of Brook Farm, in particular, a number of American artists and writers helped create a **distinctly American national culture through literature and art** (ex: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Charles Willson Peale).

Key Concept 4.1.III.A

Key Concept 4.2.III.B

During these same years, a new urban popular culture arose as East Coast cities grew in size and population. Part of this expansion was **due to a wave of immigration from Europe**. While cities seemed to promise success and adventure, many found a much harsher reality there, living on subsistence wages in poor housing. Immigrants often confronted particularly virulent **xenophobia**.

Key Concept 4.1.II.C

Key Concept 4.1.II.A

Key Concept 4.1.III.C

Key Concept 4.1.III.B

This reform era also saw the expansion of **abolitionist and women’s rights movements**. The **abolitionist movement in particular found support among free African Americans** (ex. David Walker) and **from enslaved African Americans** (ex. Nat Turner). Growing out of the abolitionist movement, the early women’s rights movement drew on **middle-class women’s experiences** as they stepped out of their culturally prescribed roles to advocate for property and voting rights (ex: Seneca Falls).